

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A dry-process nonwoven pulp fabric composed of united layer structures,

~~which contains~~ comprises an internal layer portion in which heat-bondable synthetic fibers and ~~comprises surface layer portions on both sides in which the synthetic fibers are heat bonded to one another and which has a basis weight (METSUKE) of more than 5 g/m² to 12 g/m², and an internal layer portion in which heat bondable synthetic fibers and pulp fibers are mixed at a ratio of 20/80 to 60/40% by weight and the synthetic fibers and/or the synthetic fibers and pulp fibers are heat bonded to one another and which has a basis weight of 8 to 240 g/m², wherein the front and back surface layers~~

and surface layer portions between which the internal layer portion is sandwiched, which contain heat-bondable synthetic conjugate fibers and the synthetic conjugate fibers are heat bonded to one another and which has a basis weight (METSUKE) of range from more than 5 g/m² to 12 g/m²,

wherein the internal layer portion and the surface layer portion are united as a whole by heat bonding of the synthetic conjugate fibers to one another, the ratio of a strength in a lengthwise direction to that in a crosswise direction is from 0.8 to 1.2 in both dry and wet states,

the ratio of a strength in a dry state to that in a wet state is from 0.6 to 1.1, the water absorption is from 8 to 20 g/g, and the total basis weight is from 20 to 250 g/m².

2. (new): The dry-process nonwoven pulp fabric according to claim 1, wherein a combination of polymer which constitute the heat-bondable synthetic conjugate fiber is polyethylene/polypropylene, polyethylene/polyester, or polypropylene/polyester.

3. (new): The dry-process nonwoven pulp fabric according to claim 1, wherein the heat-bondable synthetic conjugate fiber has a length from 1 to 15 mm and the fineness from 0.5 dt to 50 dt.

4. (new): The dry-process nonwoven pulp fabric according to claim 2, wherein the heat-bondable synthetic conjugate fiber has a length from 1 to 15 mm and the fineness from 0.5 dt to 50 dt.